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## OLD TIMES AND NEW.

Is the present day, when one seldom or never hears of anything like peculation and fraud in connection with the administration of public affairs in England, it is apt to be forgotten that this species of integrity is but of comparatively modern date; for readers of history well know that there was a time, not so very long ago, when among the higher classes in England, as well as Scotland, there prevailed quite as despicable a species of corruption and double-dealing as is now lamentably visible in the United States. Going back no farther than two hundred years ago, we find instances of peculation, fraud, and barefaced deception so very astounding as to be scarcely conceivable—men of the highest title and position, when they had a chance, pocketing money not their own, and selling themselves to rival parties and dynasties with as much complacency as is now exhibited by the meaner order of voters at an election in Norwich. The grotesqueness of the whole affair is enhanced by the fact that the period notable for these delinquencies was peculiarly signalised by fervid ecclesiastical wranglings. Men who would have suffered death rather than give up their cherished religious distinctions, did not scruple to rob and plunder at all suitable opportunities. There was no want of ecclesiasticism, but wonderfully little morality.

Summoning up an array of departed greatness united with profound villainy, the first who presents himself in the spectral throng is that heedless and incorrigible being, Charles II. Devoid of principle, he sold Dunkirk to the French for five hundred thousand pounds, and pocketed the money, instead of paying it into the national exchequer. That, however, was about the least of his treacheries. During his whole reign, he privately accepted a pension in the form of a bribe from Louis XIV. James II., his brother and successor, was equally base in becoming a dependant of the French sovereign. The conduct of these two, the last of the reigning Stuarts, who brought ignominy on their race, can be looked

back upon only with sentiments of unutterable detestation. When kings were so far forgetful of honesty and self-respect, what could be expected from the statesmen and other public officials of the period? Among those who come gaily to the front as depredators is John Churchill, who ultimately became Duke of Marlborough. Born of a good but impoverished family, John got so little education that he was never able to spell. But wholly unscrupulous, he sacrificed his honour in a way we refrain from mentioning in order to be appointed an ensign, from which position he, by court-favour, rose to be a captain and lieutenant-colonel. Marrying Sarah Jennings, a lady as remarkable for her beauty as for her talents and imperious disposition, Churchill was raised by James II. to the peerage as Baron Sundridge. Never for a moment losing sight of the main chance, he ostensibly deserted the cause of James, when that luckless monarch fled to France, and passing over to William, Prince of Orange, he was made by him Earl of Marlborough. While in the service of William, he greatly distinguished himself in fighting against the French, yet all the time by secret manœuvres he fraudulently kept up an intercourse with James at St Germain. It was a beautiful case of double-dealing. According to Macaulay, who has tracked him out by ransacking the 'Stuart Papers,' Marlborough had no sense of probity. He cared neither for Whig nor Tory. The only thing he cared for was money. 'All the precious gifts which nature had lavished on him he valued chiefly for what they would fetch.' With the most winning manners, he cheated right and left. As a military commander, he drew a large allowance, under pretence of keeping a public table, but he never asked an officer to dinner. He made up fraudulent muster-rolls. He pocketed pay in the names of men who had long been dead, killed in battle in his own sight years previously. There were twenty such names in one troop, and thirty-six in another. The historian offers proofs of these villainies, but a more magnificent act of villainy is still to come. In the whole round of state annals there

is perhaps nothing to match it. As a revelation of the depths of avarice and treachery in the human heart, it is invaluable.

King William determined to send a powerful naval expedition to attack the French at Brest. The command was given to General Talmash. At this time, 1694, Marlborough was in London, dancing attendance on the court, and under civil as well as military allegiance to King William. Having furtively discovered the purpose of the expedition, he sent intelligence of the attack to James at St Germain, in order that it might be communicated to the French government. The result of this nefarious transaction was that the English force on trying to land at Brest was cruelly defeated, Talmash was mortally wounded, and four hundred sailors with seven hundred soldiers were killed. With his last breath, Talmash exclaimed that he had been lured into a snare by treachery. Loud were the expressions of grief and indignation. No one could be fastened on as the author of the calamity. 'The real criminal,' says Macaulay, 'was not named; nor till the archives of the House of Stuart were explored, was it known to the public that Talmash had perished by the basest of all the hundred villainies of Marlborough!' The explanation given of the treachery is simply this: Marlborough had two years before been set aside from active duty, and wanted to get the post occupied by Talmash, so that he might carry on his old system of plunder by drawing pay for men who did not exist. Subsequently, as is well known, this able but bad man distinguished himself in the war of the Spanish Succession, was raised to a dukedom, and died full of riches and worldly honour in 1722. The truth has now come out regarding him. With all his brilliant talents, he was a cold-blooded, scheming traitor. Such was the great 'Malbrouk,' of French ironical song.

At the close of the late Franco-German war, when accounts were overhauled by the French authorities, there were some amazing disclosures of fraud; one of the worst being that of an army contractor who had supplied to the soldiers shoes with paste-board soles, which went to wreck almost immediately on being used, and whole regiments, though apparently wearing shoes, were really marching barefoot. Tricks of this kind, either through the connivance or folly of commanding officers, were quite common in England towards the end of the seventeenth century. Arthur Herbert, Earl of Torrington, as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Admiral of the Fleet, was so careless of his duties, that the sailors under his command were nearly starved. The dealers who contracted to supply the navy sent casks of meat from which even dogs turned away in disgust, and also barrels of beer which smelt worse than bilge-water. So badly were merchant-ships protected by Torrington, that their proprietors gladly paid immense bribes to secure the convoy of Dutch privateers.

The contests between the Old and the New East India Companies (1693) were a fertile source of demoralisation. The Old Company wishing to preserve its valued monopoly, never hesitated, as occasion required, to purchase the favour of men in power. They scattered bribes wholesale, but perhaps never so profusely as when an endeavour was made to get a renewal of their charter. Fearing that the charter might not be renewed, the Directors put a

hundred thousand pounds at the disposal of Sir Thomas Cook, an eminent merchant in London, to be distributed among the great men at Whitehall, and for which no questions would be asked. Among the parties who participated in this shameful bribe was the Marquis of Caermarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds. The charter was secured; but the corruption that had been practised was ultimately disclosed, and Leeds only escaped impeachment by sending the principal witness against him out of the way. Cook, the distributor of the bribes, was sent to the Tower, but was so fortunate as to secure a bill of indemnity by offering to tell all he knew of the business. In the whole case we are reminded of that in which General Belknap and certain state officers at Washington have lately and very painfully been mixed up.

It appears to have been quite customary for navy and army contractors to give bribes in money to officers to pass their accounts, in which articles of a worthless kind were charged at extravagantly high prices. Henry Guy, a member of parliament and Secretary of the Treasury, received a bribe of two hundred guineas for some jobbery of this nature, and the delinquency being discovered, he was sent to the Tower. About a month later, Craggs, who had begun life as a barber, and risen to the dignity of an army-clothier, was sent to the Tower on a charge of corrupting the colonels of regiments with whom he had dealings. The pillage that went on in all departments of the state proved a source of extreme vexation to King William, who felt himself to be surrounded by little better than a band of robbers. It was difficult to say who could be trusted. Professed Whigs and professed Jacobites were alike deceitful. The precincts of Whitehall and of Holyrood swarmed with politicians as corrupt as could now be found in Athens, Washington, or New York. There was a state of universal corruption. The leading men about the court, including Russell and Godolphin, were, like Marlborough, see-sawing between loyalty to James and William, and a deep stain has accordingly been left on their character.

In these Old Times, as has been often observed, the Scottish nobility and gentry shewed an immense aptitude for bribes to soothe their feelings when changing, or pretending to change, their politics. If anything, they were more rapacious than their English neighbours, because they were more needy; but, to do them justice, they were generally satisfied with smaller sums. One of the least scrupulous of the wretched set was Campbell, Earl of Breadalbane, to whom, under the Revolution Settlement, was assigned the onerous duty of pacifying, more properly, buying up, the Jacobite clans. For this purpose, a large sum, said to be twenty thousand pounds—which would go the length of three times that amount in our days—was put at his disposal. He succeeded in quieting for a time a few turbulent chiefs, but never gave any explanation of what he had done with the money; and it has always been the universal belief that he kept the greater part of it to himself. The melancholy fact is, that during the whole affair, while professing loyalty to William, Breadalbane was carrying on an underhand correspondence with St Germain, and contriving to bring about a rebellion. At the outbreak of 1715, he sent five hundred men to join the standard of the Pretender.

Barton, who has the merit of having brought to light a vast number of curious particulars concerning Scottish history, tells us to a penny the amount in sterling money given by the English government to buy off the opposition of certain Scottish noblemen and gentlemen to the Union. To make things look decent, the cash was imparted in discharge of illusory accounts. A few, such as the Duke of Athole and Marquis of Tweeddale, got a thousand pounds each; the greater number had from two hundred to three hundred pounds; one had fifty pounds; and Lord Banff received the more pitiful sum of eleven pounds two shillings. The Earl of Marchmont stands at the head of the roll as having pocketed L.1104, 15s. 7d., and so nicely 'had he estimated the value of his conscience, as to give back five-pence in copper, on receiving L.1104, 16s.' The sum-total which was distributed among these needy opponents of the Union was L.20,540, 17s. 7d. The English may be congratulated on having made so good a bargain; and the Scotch of the present day have no reason to be dissatisfied.

Modern novelists seeking about for a plot, would have an excellent choice in the history of the period in which the austere but upright William was beset by crowds of titled peculators—Marlborough, of course, in the foreground, with the voluptuous Torrington, the treasonous Russell and Godolphin, and the avaricious Leeds, followed by Guy and Craggs, communing on their misfortunes in the Tower. As regards inferior characters in the piece, some fun might be extracted from Taafe, a Roman Catholic priest, who turned Protestant, and set up the business of an informer on unfortunate Jacobites. Artistically, a good deal could be made of Taafe. How he persuaded the Secretary of State to send him with a body of officers to search for evidences of treason in the mansions of noted Jacobites in Lancashire; how, when the officers were searching for concealed stores of arms, Taafe went into the private chapels and adroitly pocketed silver crucifixes and other articles of value. And then what a splendid dénouement! Taafe selling himself to the poor Jacobites, whom he had plundered, and stating at their trial at Manchester that all he had reported against them to the Secretary of State was a downright lie; whereupon the court breaks up, and the unfortunate judges are hooted and pelted out of the town. With such interior furnishings, the story would be as amusing as *Peveril of the Peak*; and it might at least, in a graphic way, give an insight of the manners at the court of William and Mary.

But long after the taciturn Dutchman and his affable English consort had passed away, corruption continued to flourish in high quarters. It was rife in the reign of Queen Anne, though not always successful in escaping detection. Sir Robert Walpole, while a member of parliament and Treasurer of the Navy, was found guilty by the House of Commons of 'a high breach of trust and notorious corruption,' and accordingly was expelled the House and sent to the Tower (1712). Restored to fortune on the accession of George I., Walpole rose to eminence as a statesman; but till the last—and perhaps impelled by the difficulty of securing friends to his administration—he reduced corruption to a science by a skillful adaptation to individual wants: to one a bribe in money, to another a place, to a third a title, and so on, till all in turn

were pleased. The plan was eminently successful. Peace was secured by what, after all, was no great outlay by the state. Few prime ministers have been so distinguished for his ingenious artifices as Sir Robert Walpole. In our own times he is best remembered as the author of the saying sadly humiliating to human nature, 'that every man has his price.'

It would be a fine theme for a philosophic essay to trace the gradual extinction of corrupt practices in the English administration along with the growth of an acute sense of honour in all public transactions. A man of any mark high in office would be now loath to have his name associated with acts of bribery and corruption such as were by no means uncommon in the reign of George II. The writer of any essay on this subject, while speaking of the influence of moral agencies, would not forget to shew that very much of the delinquency of past times was a direct result of balancing opinions and interests between two rival dynasties. For fifty years after the flight of James, there were lurking hopes of a Restoration; and not until these hopes were stamped out on the field of Culloden was there anything like a distinct progress in those virtues which now distinguish the best order of society in Britain. Under later auspices, our country, in all departments except among Stock Exchange gamblers, Prospectus-mongers, and the very meanest of the population, has happily and so effectually thrown off the scandals which discredited the conclusion of the seventeenth and the early years of the eighteenth century, that a disclosure of what took place in Old Times will appear to be scarcely credible. Corrupt administrative practices of superlative extent and magnitude, it is sorrowful to think, have found a home in other lands where a keen sense of personal honour is lost in party struggles, and where leading officials seem, from all accounts, to be but imperfectly acquainted with the elements of social and political probity. w. c.

## FALLEN FORTUNES.

## CHAPTER XXI.—THE POWER OF 'OLD TIMES.'

'EDITH, darling, I have thought of a plan.' This was the way John Dalton 'broke it' to his wife in her chamber that afternoon; he felt that with her it was no use to silver the bitter pill, for that her love, no matter what disguise they wore, would detect the aloes.

'A plan, dearest?' answered she, in trembling tones. There was something in his voice, though he had made it as buoyant as he could, that presaged to her of ill.

'Yes, love. The more I think of that Brazil mine, the more I cling to it. I think with you, that that strange warning, not to deem all as lost there, came from a friendly hand; and though I do not say that Holt has played me false—I have no proof of that, you know.'—

'Never mind Mr Holt, love, now,' interposed she calmly.

'Well, I have come to the conclusion that the best and only course that now lies open to me is to see after the thing with my own eyes—to go to Brazil.'

'To go to Brazil!'

How faint and full of fear that echo was! She had been standing by his side, with one hand

resting on his shoulder, and he felt her clutch it, to save herself from falling.

'Yes, dear; why not?' he went on in cheerful but caressing tones. 'It is what men of business are doing every day: a few weeks out, a few weeks home again. We miss them at the club for a month or two, and then they are back again so soon, it seems impossible they can have gone so far—not that it is really far away nowadays,' he added hastily. All his finesse, all his dexterous phrases, had clean gone from him. The despair in his wife's eyes had disarmed him of all those weapons which he had been wont to wield so well.

'If you think, darling, that I had better stay at home—that is,' added he with a wan smile, 'in England, and trust to the chapter of accidents; to the possible aid of friends, or the special intervention of—of Fate' (it was curious how the spectacle of his Edith's misery made him rebellious against the Hand which, if it had not caused it, still had not warded it off, and how again her sad reproving glance brought him back in an instant to submission)—'if you have any reasonable expectation that things may mend with us; that to-morrow will be not like to-day, and yesterday, and all other days since this befell us, void of help and hope—I will stay on. Or, if you feel that the parting from me—for six months at most—is more than you can bear'—

'No, no!' she murmured hoarsely, while her face, sharp, anguished, racked with woe, denied her words. He did not look upon it, but kept his eyes upon the pattern of the carpet, though one hand clasped her own, and one was thrown about her waist and held it close.

'I am yours, God knows, Edith, in any case, but having lost your all, the least I can offer is myself, to go, to stay, exactly as you choose to order it—only this seems the best. Holt cannot tell—or will not—how matters at St José really stand. No one in England seems to know about it, and none has such cause to care as I. It will at least be movement, action. I shall feel that I am doing something, striving to build up a little what my folly has destroyed; I shall not, as now, be sitting with folded hands, watching the gathering clouds before they burst and overwhelm my dear ones—O Edith, let me go!'

'Go, dearest, go,' said she. 'If any hope lies that way, go—to Brazil. We shall not—our hearts at least will not be parted: all day my thoughts will be upon you, and all night, if sleep should come, my dreams will be full of you.—O God, protect this man,' exclaimed she passionately, 'whom Thou hast given unto me to be mine own, and bring him back to those he loves!'

She had fallen on her knees upon the footstool by his side, and on her upturned face the sun was shining. No pictured saint with glory on her brow ever looked more pure and fair.

'What am I, what am I,' thought Dalton, 'that this sweet soul should importune Heaven for me? What are we all—we men—that our women should do the like for us? And would they do the like if they knew what we were?' 'To those he loves,' she prayed, but not "to me." He took no note of that when the words were spoken, but yet they lived with him, and looked at by the light of things to come, had afterwards a keen significance.

'And when is it you think of'—

'The steamer by which—subject to your wishes, dearest—I design to sail leaves Southampton on Sunday week.'

'So soon!' sighed she. 'But you know best.'

'Nay, darling, I know nothing. But it seems to me that what I am to do, if it is to be done, should be done at once. Holt tells me that there is no means of getting information—except by telegraph—from the agent at St José, or from the English expert who was sent out to see about the mine. Now, I'm sure if I asked Campden, he would say at once: "Go and look into this matter with your own eyes. Search your well for the truth while the water is clean, which it may be the interest of some people to sully." There is no doubt that the whole affair is a swindle, but still there may be some advantage in getting to the bottom of it.'

Mrs Dalton sighed. It might be so, or it might not, but her mind reverted to the times—not so long ago—when her husband had had nought to do with any such matters.

'If your time is so short, darling, would it not be right to let the dear children know? Every hour that they now pass away from you, in ignorance of its preciousness, they will regret hereafter. "We might have been with dear papa," they will say, when you are far away, John.'

'Let us wait till we get home, dearest. It is but two days more. If we told the girls and—Tony'—their very names melted the waxen heart within him—they would never keep the secret. I don't want Campden to know it, and especially that woman'—it was thus I am afraid that Dalton, although unconscious of his disrespect, indicated his hostess—'while we are still their guests. We will part company just as usual, and then I will write and tell him.'

'The girls will be very brave, John—of that I am certain; and as for Tony, except for the pomp and circumstance of being an Eton boy, he has no ambitions to be shattered. As for his education—at all events for the present—that will be superintended by Jenny, who, he has always protested, has taught him more than all his other teachers put together.'

'Poor Jenny, poor Jenny!' murmured Dalton. To his heart of hearts, his invalid daughter was the dearest of all his little flock; and when he shewed it, it was gladly pardoned to him by all the rest, by reason of her infirmity. 'O Heaven!' cried he in anguish, 'that I should have brought my Jenny to such a pass as this!'

'Jenny will do very well, John,' returned his wife with cheerfulness.

'What!' exclaimed he, almost in anger; 'without doctors, or sea-air, or comforts such as she has always been accustomed to, and which she needs more than all the rest? No, Edith; she will die, and it will be her own father who has'—

'John, this must not be,' interrupted his wife reproachfully; 'if you break down like this, what will become of us?'

'That is what I am thinking of,' answered he bitterly.

'Well, and I have been thinking of it too, and have hit upon a scheme for the future, which I should have told you a while ago, only your great plan put my little one out of my head. My notion is, that when we have got rid of our house, which of course must be done as soon as possible,



we should all go and lodge with Mrs Haywood. The dear old woman dotes upon the girls, as much as when she was their nurse, and I am sure would be delighted to have us. I think we could live in Brown Street as cheaply as anywhere.'

It was wonderful to see how this fragile and delicate creature, bowed down by present misfortune, and full of worse foreboding for the future, rose up to confront the evil day, and make what provision she could against it.

'It would be cheap, no doubt,' observed Dalton ruefully. 'Let me see; she lives somewhere out Pentonville way, does she not?'

'You ought to know, John, since you furnished the house for her. She, poor dear old thing, always speaks of you as though you were a sort of deputy-Providence. We could all be housed safely and snugly there, you see, till you came back again, and you would feel quite comfortable in your mind about us. With a good house over our head, and the dearest old landlady in Christendom to look after us, and Tony's education going on, why, there will not be so very much to complain of, after all.'

Dalton's mind had wandered to Brown Street, which, in spite of his late inquiry, he remembered very well. When Kate and Jenny emerged from childhood, and Tony was sent to school, and there was no longer need of Nurse Haywood's services, instead of pensioning that faithful and affectionate woman—the same who had given Jenny, by-the-bye, her favourite desk—Dalton had bought the lease of a small house for her, and fitted it up for the reception of lodgers. The old lady preferred to get her own living—she always 'liked to be doing summut,' she said; 'and could never abide being idle'—rather than 'to take wages for doing nothing;' and it was now fortunate indeed that she had been provided for in this way. The happiest days of her life were those in which her old mistress or her young ladies would drop in to take a dish of tea on an afternoon, in her back-parlour, and talk over old times, while their fine carriage stood outside her door to the admiration of the neighbours. As a general rule, 'carriage-people' did not come to Brown Street, which was not in a fashionable neighbourhood. It was in a northern suburb, new, and therefore comparatively clean, and Mrs Haywood's little mansion was the pink of cleanliness; if she ever used strong language it was excited by the indignation against 'them dratted blacks,' which she regarded as a 'Southerner' the living negro in rebellion. But this was a feature into which Dalton did not go; it was the insignificance of the place and the poorness of its surroundings—not its cleanliness—that presented themselves to his mind. He beheld his Edith, accustomed to luxurious dwellings, raiment, food, living out in this poor spot the remainder of her years; gradually forgotten by the world in which she had moved and been admired; he saw his Katy, already the belle of many ball-rooms, though so young, become a household drudge; he saw Jenny—the bright, courageous, stricken girl—fighting in vain against such enemies as poverty and solitude: he saw Tony, shut out from the class to whom he belonged by nature as well as birth, and growing up a City clerk. It was a picture, every detail of which inflicted upon him pain and remorseful pity. He could not face his Edith's future with the courage with which she faced it for herself.

When she said that 'there would not be so much to complain of, after all,' he could not mirror back her smile, nor add one word of comfort to swell the meagre stream of her content. Her plan, however, pitiable as it might be, was practicable; and all that could be *done*, that could be set about with hand or brain, in his sad case, was welcome to him. He wrote at once to his lawyer, with regard to the immediate disposal of their house in town, and his wife wrote to Nurse Haywood, as she was still called. By the time their replies could be received, there would be no reason for further concealment; and if it were possible, Dalton wished to see matters arranged for his dear ones before quitting England.

Alas, how much precaution, prudence, providence for others is thrown away in this world; though, let us hope, the affection that has dictated them will be taken into account by Him who provides for all. What tears are shed for only seeming woes! What bulwarks are set up with infinite pain and loss, when, in fact, there are no assailants! What energies are wasted for a shadow!

That very day, when the afternoon post came in, John Dalton marked his friend and host look up at him from a letter with a look that told him his secret was discovered. He was always on the watch for such a look. It seemed to him strange that even the very servants were unaware that he was a ruined man; and now it had come at last. It was scarcely to be expected that some echo of the tidings which he had confided to so many would not return to Riverside before he could get away; and so it had happened.

Holt and Tony were in the room at the time; the boy had just received a letter from a school-friend, who had preceded him to Eton, which painted the joys of that famous school, and he read scraps of it aloud in triumph. 'What fun it must be, papa, must it not?'

And with no unusual tenderness (though his heart was nigh to breaking) he had answered: 'Yes, my boy;' and then stepped out of doors alone, in expectation of Campden following him, which he did immediately.

Dalton heard the familiar footsteps on the gravel-walk behind him moving quicker than usual, and felt the friendly hand laid upon his shoulder; and he stopped, but did not turn his head. Perhaps, he had some suspicion—so bitter had he become of late—that his old friend's face might be already changed towards him.

'Why, Dalton, my dear old fellow, what is this? A man has written to me this afternoon, and tells me—'

'It is true, Campden,' answered the other hoarsely: 'I know the news he gives you. I am ruined.'

'Ruined, John! I hope things are not so bad as that!'

There was a genuine and tender sympathy in the inquiry, and yet there was something too that jarred on Dalton's ear, so sensitive had sorrow made it.

If things had not been so desperate with him then, it seemed this man would have taken the matter coolly enough.

'Things are quite as bad, Campden; they could scarcely by any possibility be worse.'

'That is what one always thinks when one is knocked over for the first time. Yet one often

finds there are no bones broken, after all. How has it all happened? My correspondent writes it was a mine: things, in my opinion, as dangerous in speculation as in warfare.'

'Yes; but, unfortunately, I did not consult you,' answered Dalton coldly.

'Well, my dear fellow, do it now,' returned the other good-naturedly. "Two heads are better than one," even though the one may be the longer. Don't be savage with me, for it is I, remember, who have caused for annoyance rather than you. I mean," added he gently, since Dalton remained silent; "I might well complain, as your oldest friend, that you have been applying to others for assistance in this matter, instead of first coming to me."

'I knew you could not help me, Campden—except in one way,' answered Dalton in a softened tone; 'and I was proud, and wished my ruin to remain unknown until I had left your roof.'

'I should have hoped that my roof would have been as your own, John, and myself as yourself. There, there—let us come into the shrubbery. How about this mine? Where is it? Or does it exist at all? Sometimes they don't.'

'It is in Brazil—the *Lara*. Near the great St José mine.'

'The *Lara*! Why, my good fellow, that has burst up altogether. It was a plant, it seems, from the very first. How, in the fiend's name, did you ever get connected with such a thing?'

'It is scarcely worth while to go into that,' replied Dalton doggedly. 'I am connected with it. Everything I have in the world is in it.'

'Then you have been swindled.'

'Very likely. I am not quite sure, however, how the matter stands. I am going over by the next Rio mail to see after it myself.'

'You are going to Brazil?'

'Yes; that is fixed. It is at least better than going to perdition, which I should feel that I was doing every day that I stopped here in England with my hands before me.'

'And your wife?'

'She knows it all—knows that I have lost my fortune and her own by my cursed folly; and that I have just this slender hope left of retrieving it. She has made up her mind to part with me. She has ten times my courage, and a hundred times my worth. God help her!'

'I say Amen to that, Dalton. But why should she not stay here—she and the girls—while you are away? I am sure Julia—'

'Thank you, but that is impossible,' interrupted Dalton. 'It is, nevertheless, an unspeakable comfort to me to know that I leave her and hers with such a friend to counsel and assist them as yourself. You will be true, and tender to them, I know; you will remember old times, George, and your old friend, even if you never see him more.'

'By the help of Heaven, I will, John!' answered the other.

The two friends grasped one another's hands in silence. Neither of them were men much given to sentimental reminiscence; but at that moment the door that shuts out the Past swung back upon its noiseless hinge, to each disclosing many a sunny picture: a grass plot in a college court; a lime-walk musical with bird and bee; a river running under many a bridge, past sloping gardens; snug chambers, loud with youthful revelry. They had lived among such scenes together

long ago, and had had such joys in common as only youth, on whom no shadow of coming care has need to rest, can know. The hand that reaches through the mist of time, and touches hearts, was on them both. For half a second they were boys again; then habit resumed its sway.

'You will draw on me of course, Dalton, in case you should need money out yonder,' observed Campden; and he threw his thumb over his shoulder to indicate the geographical position of Brazil.

'I hope that will not be necessary,' said the other, smiling.

'I hope so too; no one *wants* to be drawn upon; only, if you require a banker, at least give me the refusal!'

'Hollo, Tony, what is it?'

It was a relief to both men, but especially to the one who had thus tendered his good services, and was beyond measure apprehensive of being thanked, that their conversation was thus interrupted. The boy ran to them eager-eyed and flushed with haste—a very Ganyমে of a messenger.

'Please, papa, mamma wants you when you are disengaged.'

'And what is your hurry about, young master?' inquired Mr Campden.

'Dr Curzon is here, and he says I may ride his pony.' He was off again like a shot.

'That is a likely boy of yours, Dalton.'

'Yes, poor lad. He little thinks that he will never see Eton.'

'But why should he not? It's a pity such a clever little chap as that—quite a chip of the old block, I'm sure—should be deprived of his schooling. Come, I'm his godfather; let me take so much at least upon my shoulders. You are not too proud for that, surely. If you are, I shall see what Mrs Dalton can do with you.'

'You are most kind, indeed, George; the fact is, Edith and I had arranged that Jenny was to be his tutor for the present; but I should be very glad to spare her.'

'Then, that's settled. Nay, I won't keep you from your wife another moment, so let's say no more about it. The boy shall not be balked of going to Eton.'

#### ARTIFICIAL STONE.

In the *Journal* of December 25, 1875, page 831, the following paragraph appeared: 'In Saxony, a method of hardening sandstone has been tried with success. The stone is soaked in a solution of alkaline silicates and of alumina, which penetrate some inches, and impart so great a degree of hardness to the surface that it will bear polishing, and has the look of marble. If exposed to great heat, the surface vitrifies, and may be coloured at pleasure.'

The paragraph, although not introduced for such a purpose, suggests occasion for doing justice to an eminent inventor, and offering a few notes that might serve for an interesting chapter in the 'History of Inventions.' These purposes will be effected by a brief account of the inventions and processes by which Mr Frederick Ransome, of the well-known Ipswich family, preserves natural stone and manufactures artificial stone. The same

essential principles are involved in each process; and from a description of his mode of making artificial stone, his method of preserving natural stone may be readily inferred.

Mr Ransome commenced his toilsome and difficult career as an inventor in 1844. He received his inspiration from observing a workman at the Ipswich works renewing the worn-out ridges of a buhrstone for a flour-mill. The hard siliceous prominences and the softer parts of the stone alike had to be cut down to the same level; and the first step in his inventive faculty was the desire to produce a homogeneous stone of uniform texture throughout. The thought led to action. It was easy enough, as may be supposed, to find the materials for the basis of such a stone; but the discovery of a cementing agent to bind together the particles, constituted the grand difficulty. He had then only a slight acquaintance with the respective properties of mortars or cements of any kind, and had not as yet got beyond elementary knowledge in chemistry or mineralogy. He tried in succession as a cement plaster of Paris, shellac, glue, isinglass, mastic, lime mixed with bullock's blood; but all these were failures. He next added a portion of pulverised glass to the sand, subjected the mixture to hydraulic pressure, and exposed the moulded blocks to the heat of a furnace. This was a step in the right direction, but still a failure. The moulded pieces broke up in the furnace, or ran into vitrified masses. He then commenced operations upon flints, in the hope of obtaining a species of liquid glass. Having mastered certain chemical facts, he put a quantity of flints and caustic alkali into an improvised Papin's Digester. He tied down the lid of the pot with wire, but by and by, fearing that it might burst, he flung it into a cistern, when it flew to pieces, and happily disclosed by its contents that his labours had not been all in vain—the flints had been reduced to sirup; and he now knew that he could reduce flints to about the consistency of melted glue. In short, he had found the cement he needed for his pounded stone or grains of sand.

This was the first decided step towards the attainment of the greatly desired end. By combination of this semi-fluid—obtained from silicic acid, flint being really an acid—and soda, he had found a means of uniting sand, gravel, or other material, for the manufacture of artificial stone. For this invention he took out a patent in April 1845, in which he merely claims as his invention the use of soluble silicate of soda as a cement for binding together the particles of sand, pulverised stone, detritus of stone, or other similar materials; the material so produced to be subjected to pressure in the moulds, and dried in an oven. This method and these materials were defective in two important respects; the dried stone was liable to be again dissolved, and the drying was attended with great difficulties, inasmuch as the surface took a hard texture, impermeable to the moisture in the inner parts of the stone, which could only escape by fissures, injurious or altogether destructive of the production. These difficulties were, by improved modes of desiccation, overcome to a great extent; but the materials and process were still defective. His achievements up to this point, however, commanded so far the attention of scientific men, that in 1848 he was awarded the Telford Medal by the Institution of

Civil Engineers, for his paper on the Manufacture of Artificial Stone.

It was probably consideration of the best means of arresting the decay of natural stone that stimulated Mr Ransome in the direction that led to the most important of his discoveries. About 1852, before the Houses of Parliament were finished, the ornate carving and even the plain portions of the façades had begun to fall into decay, and stones in all parts of the grand structure were rapidly disintegrating. The indurating applications to stone had hitherto been of resinous, oily, or other organic substances, that were readily acted upon by atmospheric influences, and in their application caused discoloration that was highly objectionable. Mr Ransome felt that his colourless soluble silicate, or solution of flint, was the proper preservative agent to be employed, and concentrated his attention upon the endeavour to overcome the chief objection to it, to remedy its avowed defect, namely, that it was in itself soluble, and would in time succumb to the humidity of the atmosphere. He had by this time made great progress in his studies in chemistry, in so far as that science bore upon his special pursuit; and from a sound basis he evolved important practical results by a process as beautifully simple as it is important. His numerous experiments and labours in the laboratory were about 1856 specially directed to the discovery of means for converting the soluble into an insoluble silicate, that would withstand the attacks of moisture, smoke, acid vapours, or saline influences. He bethought him of the mortar used by the ancients in buildings that have for many centuries resisted the attacks of the tooth of time, and he rightly judged that if he could produce the same binding and invulnerable agent—compound silicate of lime—in the structure of his stone, he would achieve a great success, inasmuch as he would then have a cement not only insoluble but such as would envelop and bind together indissolubly the particles of which the stone is composed. His pursuit of this object was zealous and unwearied, and a successful issue was at length attained. On the 27th September 1856 the inventor took out a patent for his process—to wit, for 'Improvements in the Manufacture of Artificial Stone, and in rendering it and other building materials less liable to decay.' His invention consisted in 'the application in succession of two solutions, which by mutual decomposition produce an insoluble substance, which is deposited in the substance and on the surface of the stone or other material.'

Under the direction of the eminent architect the late Sir Charles Barry, Mr Ransome applied his process to a portion of the river-front of the Houses of Parliament. It has also been applied, with uniform success, to numerous public buildings, mansions, and other structures. Twelve years after its application to the stone-work of the museums in Trinity College Dublin, it was officially reported as having 'proved most successful'; and similar testimony of its high excellence has been offered from various quarters both at home and abroad.

As a proof of his readiness to maintain the accuracy of his theory against learned contradiction, Mr Ransome procured a lump of magnesian limestone from the Houses of Parliament, pulverised it in a mortar, and by the application of his solutions, re-incorporated the particles into cubes that were much harder than the original natural

stone. At a meeting of the Royal Commissioners, appointed to inquire and report on the decay of the stone in the Houses of Parliament, Mr Ransome produced these cubes; and 'the result,' said Professor Kerr, 'was as we have seen. He astonished the doctors, and they accepted defeat. His own astonishment he kept to himself, and took out a fresh patent.' Specimens of this new production were exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862, for which the jury awarded the prize-medal to the inventor. He was also awarded the prize-medal for his artificial stone by the jury of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Dr E. Frankland, F.R.S., Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institution, London, in December 1861 tested Mr Ransome's artificial stone, along with eight samples of the best natural freestones, for porosity, for degradation by immersion in acid solutions, boiling, drying, and brushing. The results placed the qualities of the artificial stone far above those of the natural samples. Mr Adam Sedgwick, M.A., Woodwardian Professor of Geology, Cambridge, pronounced it 'of good colour, and well fitted for solid walls or delicate architectural decorations. It is hard, and capable of resisting an enormous power of compression. . . . I believe it will be as strong and durable as the first-rate freestones found among the old strata of our country. This is my honest opinion.' Bramley Fall stone has been tested for resistance to crushing weight, which it has resisted up to 5120 pounds per square inch; Portland stone of the same sectional area has been crushed at 2630 pounds; whereas Ransome's stone has resisted crushing pressure up to 7145 pounds to the square inch. A four-inch cube of Ransome's stone, made for three months, has resisted crushing weight up to 63 tons.

Mr Ransome's process is based upon one of the most beautiful of chemical reactions; and his artificial stone is in its composition, mechanically and chemically, quite the same as that of the best building-stones known. It is perfectly homogeneous; and in its plastic state, in the earlier process of the manufacture, can be moulded into the most delicate forms, almost as sharp and clean as can be produced in metal. It is also tractable under the chisel, and is applicable to a great variety of uses severely utilitarian, as well as elaborately ornamental, from the blocks under steam-hammers to the splendid screens designed by Sir Digby Wyatt, and fixed on the end-walls of the Indian court at Whitehall. Thousands of grindstones have been manufactured of the material, and curiously enough, a large number of these have gone to Newcastle, the well-known producing and distributing centre for grindstones. Ransome's are prized by some of the great engineering firms there for their keen cutting properties, freedom from liability to clog, durability, and the absence of 'yolks' in their composition. The material has unsurpassed powers of resistance to the smoke and deleterious gases in the atmosphere of large cities and towns, to the influence of tidal alternations, of Indian summers and Russian winters, and of various other kinds of trial and attack, mechanical and climatic. Hence, the material has been extensively used abroad, as well as in London and the provinces, including amongst others, the India Offices, the London Docks, St Thomas's Hospital, the Brighton Aquarium, the Albert Bridge, Chelsea; and numerous churches and other public and private buildings.

Space will not permit of our enumerating even a few of the many difficulties this inventor had to encounter while toiling steadily to mature his work. To most men they would have proved insurmountable; but he was as fertile in resources as indomitable in perseverance; and although constantly confronted by much that was discouraging, he toiled on, studied hard, experimented untiringly to the extent of his knowledge, altering his processes as experience and fresh discoveries suggested. His progress was slow and painful, still it *was* progress; and at last his toilsome and meritorious labours have met with that success which perseverance in a useful cause invariably insures.

## AN EVENTFUL VOYAGE.

### IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

At the time my story commences, I was one of six midshipmen on an Indianan outward-bound for Calcutta, touching at Plymouth and the Cape. The vessel was one of the fine old frigate-build, with a high poop and top-gallant fore-castle, and her main-deck was pierced for twelve guns. Her name was the *Bangalore*. She was built of teak, and was as strong as wood, copper, and iron could make her. The ship was owned by a well-known firm in London, and was chartered by government to take detachments of troops from Plymouth to Bengal. The captain's name, of which he was very proud, was Robertson Benbow. He was a middle-sized, bulbous-looking man, clean shaved, with both hair and whiskers plentifully streaked with silver. His complexion was of a rich, deep yellow, almost the colour of his own Madeira, a wine to which he was not unpartial. He was between fifty and sixty years of age, and at Calcutta, was almost as well known as the Viceroy or Government House itself. He used to boast that he had in his time taken out and brought home the principal civil and military men in the country. Many of these had gone out to Bengal with him as young men, and returned with Old Bobus, as he was called, to retire on their pensions. Old Bobus was in his way a character; he was pompous in his manner, and very tenacious of his dignity, and had mixed so much in the society of civilians and military men, and others high in authority, that he had adopted not only their manners and customs, but even their mode of speaking, and was well posted up as to all appointments and promotions in the Bengal civil service. Below the rank of a commissioner, a colonel, or a judge, Captain Benbow seldom made free with any of his passengers; and young officers, or griffs, as he called them, going out to India for the first time, were objects of his particular dislike.

The *Bangalore* seldom left Gravesend without two or three, sometimes half-a-dozen, young ladies being placed under the captain's charge, consigned to Calcutta; and he took as much care of them as though they belonged to himself. The ship was at Plymouth, lying in the Sound, and we were busily employed taking on board ammunition, fresh provisions, passengers' luggage, fresh meat and vegetables, prior to embarking the troops. We were to sail at two o'clock the next day, and the troops were to embark in the morning.

The name of the chief officer was Blake; he was a little square-built man, with a large Roman nose.



He was forty years of age, and was the echo of the captain, with whom he had made several voyages.

Mr Sparks, the second officer, was the very opposite to the chief. He was a red-haired man, with a gravel-colour complexion, and whiskers to correspond. He had a bullying way with him, and a violent temper, and possessed a voice that was perpetually heard fore and aft all over the ship. Though rough and ready, Roaring Sparks, as he was called, was the smartest officer and best seaman on board.

In addition to the third and fourth officers, there were besides six midshipmen, who were learning their profession on board this vessel; and the senior of these was a remarkably well-built, stylish-looking young fellow of nineteen, with a profusion of dark wavy hair, and a pair of very piercing dark-brown eyes. He was a clergyman's son, and had been partly educated at the Royal Naval College at Portsmouth, his only brother being a lieutenant in the service. It was said that Vaughan had left the college prematurely, through being expelled, but for what reason I never heard. Although not twenty, there was scarcely a vice with which this youth was unfamiliar; but withal, he had talent, humour, and wit. His manners were frank and engaging, and his bearing peculiarly graceful, and he had also great determination; but of power to regulate his passions he was entirely destitute. Vaughan had been nearly four years at sea, was a capital yachtsman, and from infancy had been familiar with nautical matters.

While off Mount Edgecumbe, we embarked about six hundred troops, chiefly detachments for service in India, a number of officers, a judge, and about a dozen ladies; some of these were going out to rejoin their husbands, and others were the wives of officers on board. The commanding officer was the Honourable Colonel Boyle, who had seen service in the Crimea, and was going to join his regiment at Dinapore. He was accompanied by his wife, who was very thin and tall, and generally carried a small walking-cane. The lady was attended by an ayah, and was more military in her conversation than the oldest soldier on board.

The morning of the day we got under way was beautifully fine, and Vaughan was on duty at the gangway, and the troops were expected on board in the afternoon. It was ten o'clock when a man-o'-war's gig came alongside; and escorting a very stylish young lady up the gangway ladder was an elderly gentleman in the undress uniform of a post-captain. On reaching the gangway, he saluted Vaughan, and asked: 'Is Captain Benbow on board?' but just as Vaughan was about to reply, Old Bobus himself appeared, and the naval officer whose name was Nugent, stepped forward and said: 'How are you, Benbow? Glad to see you here again—wish I was going passenger with you. Allow me to introduce you to a very charming young lady, who has just completed her education, and is going to join her father in Bengal. Miss Talbot, Captain Benbow.'

'What!' exclaimed the captain; 'the daughter of my old friend, the judge at Moorsheadabad?' Old Bobus looked at her for a minute, and took her hand in his, and said: 'When you were a very little girl, and could hardly speak a dozen words, I brought you home. Twenty-one years ago I

took your father out to Calcutta, when he had been appointed by the India House; and I took your mother out to him in the *Taj Mahal* to be married. Bless me, how the time gets on!' Then turning aside to her guardian, he continued: 'You should have seen her mother, Nugent; she was a perfect picture! The first time she was presented at Government House, in Lord Auckland's time, I was present. She seemed so pretty and fresh, and had such a silvery, hearty laugh, that every one was in raptures about her. The natives all thought she was a goddess.'

'You will have another acquisition at Government House,' said Captain Nugent, 'or I am much mistaken.'

Old Bobus then proposed to shew them his ship and all its wonders; and Miss Talbot and Captain Nugent assenting, he led the way.

Miss Talbot was a bright blonde, with large violet eyes and a charming little mouth, and absolutely perfect figure. She had not been on board more than a few hours before she was the centre of attraction and admiration of all the military officers on board, and was evidently envied by the ladies, especially the younger ones. Her father was a judge in an important district, and had been brought up at Haileybury with Captain Benbow's brother. The judge's wife had died fifteen years before at Calcutta, of cholera, after a few hours' illness, leaving the judge with an only child, his little daughter Blanche, who had been sent home with an ayah and an English nurse, in Captain Benbow's charge, when he commanded the *Taj Mahal*. An aunt at Bath, sister of the judge, had undertaken the charge of the motherless girl until her education was completed.

Miss Talbot, at the time of her setting foot on board the *Bangalore*, was about eighteen years of age. Captain Nugent having inspected the vessel, went into the cuddy with Captain Benbow, and in a glass of his famous Sercial Madeira wished him and the young lady a pleasant voyage. Having called for his boat, he took his departure; but before going down the ladder and shaking hands with Old Bobus, he carelessly remarked: 'That is a smart-looking youngster at the gangway, Benbow.'

'His father was chaplain in the service with Dundas, and asked me as a favour to take him.'

'Ah, well, I hope he is as good as he is smart,' added Captain Nugent. '*Bon voyage.*'

No sooner was he gone, than the captain called for the carpenter, and gave immediate orders for the fitting up of Miss Talbot's cabin, which was the next to his own. Until that work was accomplished, both the carpenter and the stewards had but a sorry time of it.

The steam-tug came alongside with troops, and then with baggage. With the troops were some passengers who joined at Plymouth. It was a Saturday afternoon, about 2 p.m., when we hove up anchor and got under way; the wind was moderate from south-east, and the weather beautiful. We had all plain sail set, and sailed slowly out of the Sound, and were soon out in the open channel, with the Eddystone lighthouse on our starboard quarter. All hands had been hard at work securing boats, lashing spars, and getting the anchors on board and making all snug for sea. It was a beautiful evening, and the quartermaster had

struck eight bells. The watches had been set, and before the starboard watch went below, Vaughan hove the log. The poop was crowded with passengers, when Mr Sparks, who was in charge of the deck, inquired at what rate the vessel was going, whereupon Vaughan replied : 'Seven knots, sir.'

The second mate laughed sneeringly, and in his off-hand way said : 'Tell that to the marines.'

'Tell them, then,' said Vaughan, 'and heave it yourself.'

Here two or three passengers who were watching the proceedings laughed. Mr Sparks called the after-guard, and hove the log, and then declared that the vessel was barely going six-and-a-half; and turning to Vaughan, ordered him off the poop, saying that he should report his behaviour. He did not forget his promise; and the chief officer at once sent for Vaughan, and after severely reprimanding him, told him that unless he immediately apologised to Mr Sparks, he would report him to Captain Benbow. Vaughan did apologise, but did it in such a manner that it only seemed to aggravate the offence. From that night there seemed to be a feud between Vaughan and the second officer, which increased daily; and, to do him justice, Mr Sparks lost no opportunity of shewing his authority; but that did not mend matters. When Vaughan came into the cockpit, he said : 'If that second mate thinks that I am to be running-footman to him, he will find himself mistaken; and if ever he strikes me—it will be the worse for him.'

In fine weather, Old Bobus made his appearance on the weather-side of the poop, dressed in a blue frock-coat, white waistcoat, with treble-gilt navy buttons. He wore very high shirt-collars, and a large black silk tie. His linen was irreproachable. He always wore gloves, and a black silk hat minus the cockade, like an admiral. In the forenoon he would parade the quarter-deck, sometimes in company with the judge, sometimes with the colonel and his wife, and very often with his ward, Miss Talbot, of whom he appeared very proud. He would never tire of telling her anecdotes about her parents, besides stories by the score of half the people in Chowringhee. Among the lady passengers on board there was a Mrs Silver, who was going to rejoin her husband, who was captain in a Ghoorka regiment. She flirted desperately with the military officers on board, and especially the sub-alterns, who spoke of her as a nice creature. Miss Talbot, when on deck, was generally the companion of Mrs Boyle, the colonel's wife, who seemed to have voluntarily undertaken the part of chaperon. The two ladies used to sit on the lee-side of the mizzen-mast in their deck-chairs, and Captain Stammersleigh, who was an experienced hand and thorough ladies' man, would often read Byron or Tennyson to them. As for the junior officers, they were to a man smitten with Miss Talbot, and all anxious to pay their respects and shew her attention. She was equally fascinating to all, without shewing preference to any.

On Sunday it was the custom on board the *Bangalore* for the captain to invite one of his officers and two midshipmen to dine at the cuddy-table. When Mr Vaughan was asked, he not only shewed a joyous alacrity in accepting the invitation, but also in decorating himself for the occasion. It was upon one of these occasions, when Vaughan

was dining in the cuddy, that the conversation turned upon theatricals and charades, and Captain Hastings, who had had much experience in these matters, proposed that they should get up a charade or play, and finally, proposed to select one if Miss Talbot would take a part in it.

'All we want,' continued Captain Hastings, 'are a couple of scenes.'

'I hear,' suggested Mrs Boyle, 'that Mr Vaughan, among his other accomplishments, is very clever with the pencil and brushes.'

Mrs Boyle took up the matter promptly; and her pressure and that of the other ladies being put upon Old Bobus (that officer being secretly only too glad to keep his passengers amused), gracefully consented to allow Mr Vaughan to paint the scenes, saying, however, that he must not waste too much time upon them. A piece was soon selected by Captain Hastings, and approved by Mrs Boyle and the other ladies. While the scenes were being painted in the stern-cabin, and dresses planned and discussed, Vaughan, with his easy flow of conversation and engaging address, contrived to get Mrs Boyle much interested in him; and as that lady was usually accompanied by Miss Talbot, it was no wonder that she too, being very romantic and fresh from school, took much notice of him. He designed this young lady a very pretty costume, and found a sempstress among the soldiers' wives to make it up. The piece selected was *The Loan of a Lover*; and Vaughan seemed to know more about it than the stage-manager, Captain Hastings. Mrs Boyle was frequently called away to be consulted by him and the other ladies who were taking parts in the piece, and the consequence was that Vaughan and Miss Talbot were much left together. 'It was,' said Mrs Boyle, 'such a pity that such a superior young man should not have a better profession to follow than that of the sea; or, at all events, if he did follow it, why did not his friends get him a commission in the navy?'

At seven bells it was customary for all the midshipmen to muster on the poop with their sextants, for the purpose of making observations of the sun's altitude; and directly after giving the quarter-master the order to strike eight bells, it was Captain Benbow's custom to retire to his state-room and work out the latitude; and one of the midshipmen—late, Mr Vaughan—had taken it upon himself to take in the log-slate with the dead-reckoning worked up, as the passengers were assembling at the cuddy-table for tiffin.

On these occasions, after he had finished attending to the captain, Mr Vaughan frequently met either the colonel's wife or Miss Talbot, who did not scruple to ask him about the position of the vessel, or how the scenes were progressing. On one of these occasions, Vaughan, amongst his other sketches, exhibited a very spirited water-colour in miniature of the scene he was preparing.

'How very nice!' said Miss Talbot; and Vaughan thereupon asked her to accept the sketch as a souvenir of the voyage. The young lady did so, and declared that directly she arrived in Calcutta, she would have it framed. While Miss Talbot was examining the drawings, suddenly one dropped from the side-pocket of the portfolio; and as she picked it up, she coloured deeply, as, on looking at it, she recognised a sketch of herself. 'Who is that?' she said naively.

'It is an endeavour to realise a dream,' replied

Vaughan; and the young lady coloured again, but made no reply.

These apparently accidental interviews occurred once, twice, and sometimes oftener every day. That Miss Talbot was interested, not to say partial to Vaughan, was no secret on board to nearly every one, except the colonel's wife and Captain Benbow. These worthy people considered that with a young lady under their protection wrong-doing or indiscretion of any sort was impossible. It was in vain that Stammersleigh, Cager, Parker, and all the younger military men paid her the most assiduous attention; theirs created not the slightest impression.

On one occasion, little Farquhar, the junior subaltern on board, after declaring to Cager and several others who were in his cabin that Miss T. was really the only girl he had ever cared for in his life, got so chaffed for his pains, that he resigned himself to melancholy, and consoled himself for the remainder of the voyage with a favourite meerschaum, consuming tobacco almost sufficient to unsettle the nerves of a rhinoceros.

Although they never appeared to speak to one another on deck, yet, whenever Vaughan made his appearance there, Miss Talbot would change colour, and appear to be deeply absorbed in her needle-work or book. She now seldom walked the deck with Captain Benbow, and astonished that commander by telling him that he rolled so that she could not keep step with him.

There is an axiom founded on experience, that what a man has steadily set his mind upon doing, he is sure to do. He may have to wait for years before the opportunity arrives, but if his mind remain fixed in the same direction, that opportunity will assuredly come. I mention this, as Vaughan—though carefully attending to the navigation of the vessel—seemed like a man who was working out a scheme. At night, when it was his watch on deck, he would often steal down to our berth, and, taking down the cockpit lantern, would bring his writing-pad, and write a little note in pencil. After writing one of these, he would very often destroy it, and commence another. We were now getting down to the southward, and hoping in a very few days to be in the latitude of the Cape.

About a week after I had first seen Vaughan writing those notes, it was a dark night, and raining heavily; it was his middle watch on deck. He was in the starboard-watch with the second mate. The watch were setting a topmast studdingsail, and were shouting as they hauled on the halyards. It was about 2 A.M. when he rushed into the cockpit with his oilskin on, and taking down the battered old lantern which was suspended from the deck, carefully opened a little pink cocked-hat note, and read it over several times, smiling and looking very pleased as he did so. At last, he tore it up, carefully putting the pieces into his pocket. He then produced from his waistcoat another little paper, from which he took a lock of pale Saxon hair, and this he deliberately tied round with a piece of blue silk thread, and kissed; then opening the locket he always wore round his neck, he inclosed the lock of hair, and replaced the locket round his neck. He was absent from the deck about ten minutes, and had just rehung the lantern in its place again, and was going on deck, when a stentorian voice roared out:

'Skulking again! Come out, you scum of a fish-pond, and go and loose that main-royal;' and at that minute the head and shoulders of the second mate appeared enveloped in oilskins. He was crimson with rage, and loudly added: 'I've put up with your monkey tricks long enough.'

'If you are speaking to me, I should advise you to adopt a different tone,' said Vaughan. 'Recollect that you are not in the fore-castle now, though it certainly is your proper place.'

Although Vaughan appeared to be cool, he was evidently in much the same temper as the second mate, who sung out: 'By Jove! I'll make you swallow those words;' and with that he rushed in and seized Vaughan by the collar, and dragged him on deck.

'I'm ready for you,' said Vaughan, and giving a sudden spring, closed in with him like a tiger.

They were now both locked together, reeling and scuffling, and each trying to strike the other. Though very active, Vaughan, in strength, was no match for the second mate, who was the most powerful man in the ship's company; and it was evident that Vaughan was getting the worst of the encounter, when in his passion he suddenly made a spring and snatched a belaying-pin out of the rail, and quick as thought, struck Sparks a fearful blow with it across the forehead. The second mate dropped senseless on the deck, smothered in blood, and the scene of confusion that ensued baffles description. Clere, the fourth officer, followed by several of the watch, rushed up to stop Vaughan; but he stood at bay, with his back to the bulwark, and ejaculated: 'Stand back, or I will give any man the same who dares to lay a finger on me.'

Sparks was carried by Clere and some of the watch, unconscious to his cabin, with his head bound up in a silk handkerchief; and the doctor, who had been called out, had some doubts at first whether his skull was not fractured. It was some hours before he came round; and several days elapsed before he was able to appear on deck again and resume duty, and when he did so, he was marked and disfigured for life.

When this incident occurred, it was about half-past two in the morning. All the passengers and troops were below and asleep in their cabins. The chief officer was not very pleased at being disturbed from his watch below; he was, however, quickly on deck; and after calling up Vaughan, and hearing his statement, ordered him off duty, and kept the remainder of the watch himself until Captain Benbow should come on deck.

As eight bells were sounded in the morning, Captain Benbow made his appearance on deck, clean shaved, his clothes well brushed, and looking as fresh and bright as though he had enjoyed his night's rest. He was in a very good-humour. The watch had finished washing the decks, and were coiling down the ropes, when Mr Blake reported to him the particulars of the encounter during the middle watch, and also stated that he himself of late had been dissatisfied with Vaughan's conduct; that disrespect to the officers of the vessel was a bad example to the crew, and if not effectually checked, would be subversive of all discipline on board.

Old Benbow listened attentively, for he had a great opinion of his chief officer; and then getting very red in the face, said: 'Of course, of course!



Why, it's mutiny—rank mutiny—and by a youngster too. Send in that fellow to my cabin at once.'

When called up, Vaughan, in his defence, said that from the very commencement of the voyage the second officer had systematically persecuted and bullied him, till at last, in a moment of passion, when assaulted in a cowardly way by him, he had attempted to defend himself, and that Mr Sparks' wound was more the result of accident than design. He then detailed Mr Sparks' language to him, and also repeated his former statement, that he would not allow any man on board to lay a finger upon him. He had no sooner made this unlucky speech, than Captain Benbow, with the air of a judge, said: 'Silence, sir! If you dare to speak to me in that tone, I will have you put in irons at once. I did expect better things from you; but since you have chosen to mutiny on my ship, and strike one of my officers, you must take the consequences; and as you don't know how to behave as a gentleman, you must live in the fore-castle, and do duty before the mast as an ordinary seaman; and I caution you that, should I hear of any more assaults by you on my officers, I shall have you put in irons, and hand you over to the police at the Cape.'

Vaughan was beginning to reply to his sentence, when the captain said: 'Go forward, sir; I never allow replies. Go forward, and do your duty.' He then gave an oration on discipline to the officers and midshipmen assembled, which he said he would have maintained on any vessel which he commanded, or know the reason why! He then dismissed every one but the second officer, whom he severely reprimanded. 'Coarse manners, execrations, and abusive language,' said the captain, 'render men discontented, and degrade the officers, no matter how good they may be as seamen; and I trust, Mr Sparks, that I shall not a second time have to speak to you on this subject.' Sparks was about to reply, when Captain Benbow reminded him that he never allowed replies from either officers or men, and desired him at once to return to his duty.

#### NEST-BUILDING FISHES.

ONE of the most common of our British fishes, the tiny stickleback, has attracted considerable attention on account of its curious habit of building a nest—rivaling in intricacy the homes of our feathered friends—in which it deposits its eggs, and over which it keeps watch and guard till the tiny family are able to enter on the responsibilities of stickleback-life. Such precautions are unusual among the finny tribes, whose eggs are generally left to chance, or, in some cases, adhere to friendly weeds till they hatch out, and the young ones face life in the world of waters, without a parent's care to guide them. The lordly salmon makes an apology for a nest by scooping out a hollow or 'redd' in the gravel bed of the stream which it ascends for the purpose; but this, compared with the beautiful workmanship of the stickleback, is as the rook's collection of sticks to the mossy ball prepared by Jenny Wren for her bantlings.

The instances of nest-building fishes are rare, and it is among tropical species that the majority of them occur. One of these—whose lovely colours have caused it to be christened the 'rainbow fish'

—has lately been introduced in limited numbers into Europe, where its beauty has created quite a *furor* amongst the aquarium-keepers, and where it excites additional interest on account of its possessing the peculiarity of building a nest for the reception of the eggs. Probably the first person who has watched the whole of this operation was Monsieur Carbonnier, a French naturalist, who lately gave an account of his observations before the Paris Acclimatization Society.

As in the case of the stickleback, it is the male fish which performs the principal duties of nurse and cradle-keeper; but the nest of the rainbow fish differs from that of the stickleback in the fact that it floats on the surface of the water, whereas the latter is built among the weeds beneath. The approach of breeding-time is marked by the increasing beauty of colour in the male fish, who dons his best robes in order to find favour in the eyes of his mate. His scales then assume all the varied tints of the rainbow, every movement causing them to scintillate with a metallic lustre and ever-changing hue, now flashing forth with increased splendour, now dying away for a moment, only to reappear with greater variety and intensity of colour.

But his time is not all given to courting. He enters on the duties of his prospective position with vigour; and his instinct, amounting almost to sagacity, is thus exemplified in Monsieur Carbonnier's narrative. The weeds growing in the aquarium in which some of his specimens were confined were of a kind which would not float. The fish tore off bits of the leaves in his mouth, and expelled them towards the surface; but their specific gravity was too great, and his efforts were unavailing. Monsieur Carbonnier, with a quick perception of the fish's wants, replaced the plants with others of a finer texture, and then had the pleasure of seeing the fish renew its attempts with complete success.

But the fish was too cunning an architect to trust to the natural flotation of his building materials, and after placing a few pieces together in position, he formed several air-bubbles in a viscid secretion, which he was able to eject from his mouth, and placed them in contact with his floating nest. Just, in fact, as engineers among ourselves have proposed to raise the *Vanguard* by means of immense air-bags, the rainbow fish, wiser than ourselves, formed his air-bags and attached them to his ship as a precautionary measure, to prevent its sinking from natural instability, collision with piscine *Iron Dukes*, or other untoward causes.

Day by day the work of knitting together the little morsels of weed progresses, till a floating domed island three inches in diameter is formed (the fish itself is not more than half that length); but this is, so to speak, only the foundation of the edifice, the roof being in reality constructed before any other part. Beneath this roof a complete circular nest is built, which the fish welds together with the greatest industry and patience; and not till it is complete does he seek his companion. All this time the female has kept aloof, neither assisting her companion nor encouraging him by her presence in the work of nidification. But now she is induced to visit the home of her future progeny, and the labours of the exemplary parent are redoubled. When the minute eggs



are laid, he collects them in his mouth, and places them carefully within the nest, which he continually supports with fresh bubbles, lest the precious cargo should overweight it. When all is safe, he stations himself on guard before the only opening in the nest, and awaits the course of events, ready to defend his handiwork against all comers, while his better-half retires altogether from the scene. In about three days the eggs begin to hatch out. The parent fish then destroys a number of the supporting air-bubbles, causing the nest to sink deeper into the water, so that none of the young ones may be 'drowned' for want of water. As long as he can, he prevents them from escaping from the paternal roof—the title is hardly appropriate, however, for neither father nor mother has inhabited the house: but their strength rapidly increases; and, just as boys and girls leave home to better themselves, the young rainbow fish burst from the father's apron-strings and are soon exulting in their new-found freedom.

#### MATCH-MAKING IN ROSCOMMON.

In the west of Ireland, the feelings of the young woman are seldom consulted in matters matrimonial. Her father being the best judge of what is for his daughter's advantage, opposition on her part is of very rare occurrence, except where she has taken the precaution of providing herself with a husband beforehand. When a match is made and the bargain concluded, if the girl declines to accept the husband selected, she quickly loses caste, the young men considering that a disobedient daughter must of necessity make an uncomfortable wife.

Still more exceptional is any objection on the part of the young man to the wife selected for him by his father, as he feels quite satisfied that experience enables his parent to judge of the temper and qualifications of a woman much better than he possibly could. Moreover, the father has the advantage of being able to examine her merits with a perfectly impartial, and at the same time fairly critical eye. Interest and inclination alike lead him to make the best selection; he does it only after an infinite amount of cogitation; but when his choice is made, it is unalterable; and he will obstinately contend for his son's interest, without a single thought of the young woman's inclinations, taking it for granted that they will be in accordance with her father's wishes. The mother has little to say in the matter on either side. She never goes match-making, and is not in any way consulted, being only acquainted with the intentions of her husband for their son, when he has made up his mind. Marriage is a matter of business, and it is like any other bargain, made with the shrewd humorous calculating caution which characterises the Connaught man. Marriage gifts such as pigs, poultry, a cow, &c., play an important part in the arrangements; and the girl's father has been known to refuse to give her a single penny of fortune until the bridegroom's parent had conceded to her a favourite hatching goose! The following is a specimen of the way in which matrimonial affairs are managed west of the Shannon.

'Get out my Sunday clothes, Judy,' said old Corny O'Byrne, one evening when he returned from

his work. 'I'm goin' over to Pether Linskey's to-night.'

'Musha, Corny, an' what are ye goin' for?' Judy asked, as she unlocked a large deal-chest painted red, which stood near the fire-place, and carefully took out a blue frieze tail-coat, with bright metal buttons, a pair of light-coloured cord knee-breeches, ribbed worsted stockings, a pair of strong shoes, and a billycock hat, which, with a red cotton pocket-handkerchief with a flowered border (which he carried in his hat), and a stout blackthorn shillelah, constituted Corny's Sunday suit.

'Sure, I'm goin' to make a match between our Dermott an' Katie Linskey,' he said at last in reply to his wife's question. 'She's a purty colleen, an' the boy is mighty plased with her, intirely.'

'So she is, Corny, a laukie little girl, an' she'll have a snug fortune, maybe. Pether is a dacent honest man!'

'Faith, Judy, an' he is that same, or it isn't Corny O'Byrne that would "cut, shuffle, or dale" with him or his; an' Dermott tells me Katie likes him.'

'An' why wouldn't she, Corny? There's not as purty a boy in the parish; nor a better,' Judy said proudly.

'Thru for ye, ashore: give us out the ould stockin', an' we'll make a match of it this Shrove-tide, with the blessin' o' St Patrick!' Corny replied.

From the furthest corner of the chest, Judy drew out carefully an old worsted stocking, and handed it to her husband, who weighed it in his hand, and then, with a sly wink, buttoned it into one of his pockets. 'This'll do the business, Judy,' he said, as he left the house, with many *Banaughth-Laths*—God prosper, or be with you—from his wife.

Peter Linskey was a small farmer living about a quarter of a mile from Corny's cabin. He had several sons, and one daughter, Katie, who was considered the 'beauty' of the village of Ballymoynes. Her eldest brother was about to be married, and bring his wife home; and her father considered it would be very advisable to get Katie married and settled before the arrival of her sister-in-law; and Dermott O'Byrne—a fine, strapping, young fellow, very 'steady' and good-natured—Old Peter thought would make a very good husband for his girl (especially as he was an only child), if no better suitor offered.

When Corny O'Byrne reached Peter Linskey's cabin, he put in his head over the half-door, and said in Irish: 'God save all here!' the customary form of greeting in that and many other parts of Ireland.

'God save ye kindly, Corny,' Peter replied from the chimney-corner: 'come in and take a sate.'

Corny entered with both his hands behind his back, took his seat on a three-legged stool that Mrs Linskey had pushed in front of the fire for him.

'Fine weather for the crops, Corny,' Peter said, poking up the fire with his shoe. 'An' Mary, throw on a couple o' sods o' dry turf, an' sweep up the hearth, will ye?'

Mary did as her husband desired; and then going to a recess in the wall by the fire-place, took out from thence a new clay-pipe and piece of tobacco (probably got at the last wake she had been at). 'Will ye light the pipe, Corny?' she said, handing them to the old man, who took them with a nod

and 'Thankee kindly,' and filled slowly, kindled with a coal from the hearth, blew a few whiffs in grave dignified silence, and then handed it to Peter, who in equal silence smoked it for a few moments, and then handed it back to Corny, and proceeded to light his own pipe.

They both smoked steadily for a time, then Mrs Linskey pulled a small table between them, produced from her chest a stone jar of potheen, and a couple of cracked glasses, which she set on the table with a noggin of cold water; and taking up her pail, proceeded to the barn to milk the cows.

'That's a purty colleen of yours, Pether!' Corny said after a long silence.

'Thru for ye; an' a good, sensible, little girl into the bargain: it's happy's the man that'll get her,' Peter replied, after due consideration.

'That's what I said myself; an' I come over to see if we can't make a match between my Dermott an' herself!' O'Byrne said after another interval.

'He's a likely boy,' pursued Peter reflectively.

'Ye may well say that, Pether; an' he'll make a good husband, no doubt, for he's a good son. What do ye say to it?' Corny asked, leaning forward on his stool.

'I'm pleased'—

'God save all here!' said a harsh grating voice, and a head appeared in the doorway: 'Good-evening to ye, Pether!'

'Good-evening, kindly,' Peter returned. 'Come in and take a sate, Tom.'

The new-comer entered, and took a stool, and casting a questioning glance at Corny O'Byrne, proceeded to light his pipe, and smoked for some minutes. He was a stout, harsh-featured man, with a loud voice. He was not much of a favourite in the village—and especially disliked by Corny O'Byrne—who never lost an opportunity of annoying Tom Dillon. He was a comfortable farmer, and one of his sons had been 'making up' to Katie Linskey some time before. After a silence, during which the three old men smoked energetically, Dillon cleared his throat two or three times, and then said abruptly: 'Pether, I want to make a match between your little girl and my Martin; have ye anything to say agin it?'

'Sorra one word, Tom; only me neighbour Corny O'Byrne an' myself were speaking o' the same thing when ye come in!' Peter replied, with a shrewd glance at them both.

'First come, first served, Pether,' Corny said, shaking the ashes from his pipe, by knocking the bowl against his thumb-nail: 'mind that!'

'To be sure, to be sure,' Peter replied; and there was another long pause.

'An' we may as well clinch the bargain at onct,' Corny continued.

'To be sure, to be sure,' Peter again assented, smoking steadily.

'Ye have nothin' agin my Martin, have ye, Pether Linskey?' Tom Dillon said, laying down his pipe.

'Agin him? No; he's a nice dacent boy, an' I have a great regard for him,' Peter answered.

'An' he has a great regard for your little girl, an' sorra a day's good he'll do till he's married,' ejaculated Tom, bringing his fist down on the table. 'He set his mind on it, an' I'll back him out!'

'Turf an' tundther! Tom Dillon, didn't Pether Linskey tell you I came match-making for my Dermott?'

'Tundther an' turf! Corny O'Byrne, don't I tell you that I come to do the same thing for my Martin; an' I suppose a Dillon may ask a Linskey in marriage any day—an' he can afford it too!' Tom added, slapping his pocket.

'An' let me tell ye, an O'Byrne can put down pound for pound with a Linskey any day; or, for that matther, with a Dillon,' Corny said, with a scornful glance at Tom, who was in his working clothes.—'Pether,' he continued, 'ye know what I came for; what fortune are ye goin' to give Katie?'

Peter took out his pipe, emptied it, proceeded to refill it leisurely, poked the fire, relit the pipe, settled himself back in his corner, and said slowly: 'Fortune, Corny! Katie is a fortune herself. I'm a poor man, an' the times is bad; an' beyont a new gown, a couple of fleeces of wool, an' a hank or so of yarn, I can't give her any fortune!'

Corny looked astonished, and pushed back his stool, as much as to say that all further negotiations were useless; when Tom Dillon said: 'Never mind, Pether; there's them as'll be willin' to take her without any fortune, an' can afford it too!'

'Thru for ye, Tom Dillon, an' one o' them is Dermott O'Byrne. *We're* not dependin' on a few bare pounds—not but what it's well to have something to put by for the childer,' he added cautiously.

'To be sure, Corny, to be sure,' Peter assented.

'Well, Pether, is it to be me or Corny? Is a Dillon to be put behind the door for an O'Byrne? Isn't my Martin as likely a boy as there's in the barony? He'll take your colleen without a brass penny, an' do well for her. What do ye say to that?' Tom asked, slapping the table.

'Bedad, then, Tom, I'm in a fix intirely. Here's Corny, a dacent old man, with a fine steady gossoon of a son—he's the first; an' here's yourself, an' honest man an' a good neighbour—sorra better—an' sure Martin is the pride of the parish on a Sunday! I'm bothered intirely, an' *what can I say*, but settle it *betune* ye! Whichever of ye can do the best for her, take her, in the name of St Patrick!' and Peter resumed his pipe, and sunk back into his corner.

The two old men eyed one another silently for a few minutes, then Dillon pulled a little bag from his pocket, opened it deliberately, and took out another, from which he drew forth a third, made of purple stuff, fastened with a piece of red braid. Very slowly, his eye still fixed on Corny, he pulled out a sovereign, and laid it on the table. 'Shew Pether Linskey what ye mane to do, Corny O'Byrne,' he said.

Corny smiled scornfully, produced his old stocking, and taking from thence a five-pound note, put it beside him, and nodded his head defiantly. Tom drew forth four more sovereigns, clinked them one after another on the table, and nodded his head. Old Peter smoked away in his corner without uttering a word.

Corny waited for a moment, and then said: 'Is that all you're goin' to do, Misther Dillon?'

Tom threw down another sovereign—Corny followed his example, till they had each laid twenty pounds upon the table.

'Is that all you're goin' to do, Misther Dillon?' Corny repeated.

'In ready-money, it is, Misther O'Byrne.'

'Then I bate ye at that!' Corny cried, throwing down another pound.—'I bate him in cash, Pether; do ye mind that?'

Peter nodded, and smoked away.

'I'll take the girl in, an' share the best we have with her, an' give Martin two acres of land, an' a couple of *bonives*' (little pigs), announced Tom Dillon.

Dermott 'll have my land when I'm gone, every rood,' cried Corny.

'I'll give a heifer in! Twenty pounds, share of a house, two acres of land, an' a heifer.—What do ye say, Pether?' Tom cried. 'Not bad for a colleen without a penny!'

'Thrus for you, Tom,' Peter assented.—'What'll you do, Corny?'

'Twenty-one pound—down, the day they're married, a house an' home, a feather-bed, an' the finest mule in the parish—that's what I'll do!'

'But the land—Tom is giving two acres,' Peter observed: 'think of that, Corny!'

'Dermott'll have the land afther me, an' enough to eat of it till I'm gone. I have no one but him. Tom Dillon has three more to provide for!'

'An' plenty to do it with; an' I'll make it three acres, Pether, of the best upland in Ballymoyné!' Tom replied.

'It's very fair, an' I'm obliged to ye, Tom,' Peter said slowly.

'I'll make it twenty-five down, an' throw in a heifer!' Corny cried.

'It's very decent, Corny, an' I'm obliged to ye,' Peter quietly observed in the same tone.

'I'll throw in a calf!' exclaimed Dillon. 'Twenty pound, three acres of land, a bonive, a heifer, an' a calf. Now, Pether—done or not?'

'I think ye spoke of two bonives, Tom?' Peter said quietly.

'No, no; only one. It's all I can spare; an' I think it's not bad, Pether!'

'Bedad, Tom, I think ye said a couple of bonives,' Peter said again.

'*Nabocklish* [never mind], Pether. I'll throw in a *clutch* [a whole brood] o' ducks—take it or lose it! Twenty-five pounds down the day they're married, a house an' home, a feather-bed, a fine mule, a heifer, an' a clutch o' ducks!' said Corny, putting his money back into his stocking.

'Faix, an' a clutch o' ducks isn't bad,' observed Peter. 'They're better than a calf to them that hasn't a cow to feed it; an' Corny's is the best house, an' Katie'll have it all to herself. When your Matt an' James marry, it'll be mighty narrow for ye all!'

'James is going to America, Pether,' said Tom.

'Well, that makes a differ. But isn't there anything else yer inclined to offer? Dermott is the best match at this minute!' observed Peter.

'I'm done!' said Tom. Then suddenly starting up, he cried: 'Wait a minute; and ran out of the house, returning in a quarter of an hour, staggering under a great sack of seed-potatoes. 'There! Corny O'Byrne; put *that* in yer pipe an' smoke it!' he cried exultingly.

Corny, at first sight of the sack, started to his feet, and put on his hat. 'Wait a minute, Pether,' he cried; 'I'll not be long'—and running all the way home, he was soon there.

'Get me a sack, Judy—the meal-sack—an' be quick, *asthore*!' he cried excitedly.

'Arra be aisy, Corny, shure an' the male is in it.'

'Betther an' betther,' cried Corny, going into the room which served as dairy; and without vouchsafing another word to the astonished Judy, he shouldered the sack, and trotted off with it as fast as he could.

Completely out of breath, he reached Peter's, bathed in perspiration; but on entering, he unluckily tripped over the door-step, and fell with the sack full length into the kitchen. The string round the neck of the bag gave way, and covered with the meal, he groaned and stammered breathlessly: 'Th-there, Pe-pe-ther Lins-k-ey! Wh-while the *praties* was gr-growing, the meal would keep them alive! W-what d' ye say, Pe-pether?'

'Begorra, Corny, I say what I often said before, that yer a decent man—an' yer boy is welcome to Kate Linskey.'

'What do ye mean, Pether?' cried Tom Dillon.

'What I say, Tom; nor a more nor less. The childer might die o' the *faregurtha* [a fainting brought on by hunger, or over-fatigue without proper sustenance] while the *praties* was growin'. Dermott O'Byrne can best provide my little girl with comforts, an' he's welcome to her.'

At that moment a merry laugh caused the three old men to look round, and Corny tried to scramble to his feet. In the doorway stood Katie Linskey, her hands pressed to her sides, and tears of mirth coursing down her pretty face. 'I'm sorry for your trouble, Corny,' she said, advancing; 'but I could not help laughing, you looked so square; and she burst into a fresh peal.

'Be quiet, Katie, an' come here,' said Peter, beckoning his daughter to his side. 'I was match-making for ye; an' the bargain is closed betune me an' Corny for you an' Dermott O'Byrne!'

'Ye don't mane it, father!' said Katie with a comical glance at Corny and Tom Dillon.

'Shure enough, I do, ma colleen; have ye anything to say agin it?' replied Peter, knocking the ashes from his pipe.

'Musha, not a word at all, father dear; only—only—'

'Only what, Katie?'

'Only, I was married last Tuesday to Jack Mangan the painter!' she replied with a loud musical laugh, which brought her husband to the door.

'What!' shrieked Tom Dillon.

'What!' echoed Corny.

'Oh, Pether Linskey, Pether Linskey, yer afther humbugging us!' cried Tom reproachfully.

'Ay, humbugging us!' echoed Corny mournfully; and Peter, who was a sly old humorist, put his head against the wall, and laughed heartily at their astonishment.

The two ambassadors silently took up their respective sacks, and slowly departed, each thinking himself much injured, and in their mutual discomfiture forgetting their animosity. As for old Peter, he was only too well pleased to have his daughter well married and off his hands without even the 'new gown' or the priest's dues—though he could afford to give her a good fortune—as good fortunes go in that part of the country.

When next Corny went 'match-making,' he took care to find out beforehand if the young woman was 'willing;' and as for Tom Dillon, he vowed it served him right to be 'humbugged,' as he only

wanted to bother his neighbour, Corny O'Byrne (with whom he was ever after good friends), and he declared that in future his 'boys' might match-make for themselves.

### A PECULIAR PEOPLE.

UNDER the inspirations of a diseased religious feeling, aided by gross ignorance, there seems to be no end to human folly. A new 'Peculiar People' have come into notice at the antipodes, of which our readers may have heard something in the newspapers. We shall summarise information on the subject.

A few years ago a young woman of the name of Maria Heller, who lived in a small village near Hainau in Silesia, had several epileptic fits; and while she was under their influence, she pretended to receive divine inspiration and to be able to prophesy. As some of these supposed prophecies on local matters were verified, many of the villagers in the vicinity began to believe in her; and, when at last she foretold the Franco-German war, and that came true, their belief was much strengthened. Later on, some time in the year 1874, Maria announced that the Lord had revealed to her that a dreadful war would soon break out, and devastate the whole of Europe, and that Australia would be the only secure place of refuge in the world. She exhorted the villagers, therefore, to accompany her to Australia, holding out a promise that after remaining there ten years she would bring them to Jerusalem as a second resting-place, and subsequently they should return to Germany, where peace and plenty would then be found. Many of the ignorant peasantry believed, and commenced preparations for the journey. They put all their money into one common fund, and leaving themselves to Maria's guidance, proceeded by way of Hamburg to London, whence they took steamer to Melbourne. The party, numbering sixty-four souls, reached Melbourne in April 1875. Here, however, their number was reduced to sixty by the secession of four of them.

At this time, all they possessed was a little over two hundred pounds in money, and some household effects which they had brought from their German homes. They at once made their way to the Benalla district, where two of their countrymen, of the name of Berndt, had settled. From one of these (Mr Carl Berndt) they received great assistance, as most of their business had to be done through him, they themselves not being able to speak a word of English. After vainly persuading them to throw off the authority of the woman Heller, and to submit no longer to her authority, he at last declined to have anything further to do with them. They consequently became much straitened, and were nearly reduced to starvation. Their settlement is divided into two encampments, about two miles from each other, and they have built themselves bark huts to live in. They have altogether eight hundred acres of land, which they have now commenced to cultivate. Their gardens promise to be productive; but towards the end of last year, provisions were running short, and they were sore pressed. Eight of the party had died, and others were ill. One of the party who had seceded, and taken service with Mr Berndt, says that Maria has great control over them all,

that she does no work, and that under her they all run great risk of starving.

Some of these particulars having come to the ears of the police of the district, an inquiry was set on foot; and from the report made, we gather that the party were living almost entirely on 'damper' or bread, but that there were no actual signs of starvation, for the children appeared to enjoy rude health, and most of their elders seemed well, although having a worn appearance. Supplies of provisions were sent them sufficient to last until their harvest could be got in.

The party are described to be Lutherans; but they seem to have greater faith in their prophesies and her utterances than in anything else. They believe that during her trances, she has conversations with spirits, and that God speaks to them through her. They left their homes and native land because they believed it to be the command of the Almighty. Maria herself says that she has had these trances since childhood, and believes that God speaks to her in them.

Maria Heller is described as a little over thirty years of age—looking, however, nearly forty—not at all of a prepossessing appearance, and with a rather suspicious uneasy look. There is some doubt as to whether she is married or not, as one of the seceders from the party stated that she selected one of their number for her husband, because she had received a 'message' that she was to do so, and that they lived together; that this man had since died, and she had selected another of the party, to whom she was then engaged. Maria herself, however, indignantly denied having ever been married, or having lived with any one as if married.

Whether this small infatuated band will gain any new adherents, it is hard to say. It is more than likely, however, that the party will dwindle down into insignificance from secession or other causes, or perhaps become entirely broken up if anything should happen to their leader. But this little episode shews how, in our enlightened nineteenth century, people can be worked up to such a pitch of enthusiasm as to leave their homes on the faith of a promise supposed to be divinely revealed to them through one of their own flesh and blood. True, the people were poor ignorant peasantry; but it affords evidence that fanaticism still rules rampant in many quarters, and requires but the stimulus of a charlatan to carry it to extreme length. And yet, strange to say, there are many otherwise sensible folks who will regard Maria Heller as a spiritualistic 'medium' sent for the special furtherance of a noble cause!

### SPRING'S GIFTS.

Come, when the Spring the leaf unfolds,  
And calls the swallow from afar;  
When earth the flower no more withholds,  
And beauty wakes in bird and star.  
In vain the star's soft ray,  
In vain the wild bird's lay,  
Unless thou come,  
Thou wanderer, home;  
Thou, to my heart new life to be,  
Spring, with thy gracious gifts to me.

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